

VZCZCXRO9038  
PP RUEHBC RUEHBZ RUEHDE RUEH DU RUEHKUK RUEHMR RUEHPA RUEHRN RUEHROV  
RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHKH #0510/01 1040923  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 140923Z APR 09  
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3525  
INFO RUEHZO/AFRICAN UNION COLLECTIVE  
RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000510

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A A/S, AF/C, AF/E  
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND HUDSON  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/13/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPKO](#) [ASEC](#) [AU](#) [UNSC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SAF GENERALS USE FIRST MEETING WITH US ENVOY TO  
COMPLAIN ABOUT SPLA

REF: KHARTOUM 500

Classified By: CDA Alberto M. Fernandez, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On April 8, Presidential Special Envoy Scott Gration held the first high-level USG meeting in recent years with high-ranking SAF officials. The SAF noted its redeployment of forces from the South and integration of Other Armed Groups (OAGs) (as confirmed by UNMIS) while lambasting the SPLAs for its low level of redeployment (also confirmed by UNMIS). While the Generals provided evidence of progress in implementing the SAF/SPLA cease-fire since the signing of the CPA, their skewed take on their notorious campaigns in Darfur highlight the need for the International Community to press for an immediate cease-fire agreement with rebel groups and monitor activities of both the SAF and SPLA on the North/South border. END SUMMARY

¶2. (C) In a meeting at the SAF officer's club in Khartoum on April 8, SE Gration (accompanied by USSS Shortley, CDA Fernandez, DATT Crockett, and emboffs) thanked the SAF for their efforts to respect the cease-fire with the SPLA following the signing of the 2005 CPA, but warned that the ongoing militarization of the North/South border presents a serious threat that could eventually lead to renewed SAF-SPLA violence. Based on his visit (reftel), SE Gration told the Generals that Abyei and neighboring areas have the potential of becoming worse than Darfur. He warned that there is a real problem of proxy violence, as the SAF, SPLA, or other actors may be arming residents in the area. He urged the Generals to end the use of proxy militias along the border and to do everything possible to avoid a direct confrontation between the SAF and SPLA.

¶3. (C) The SAF Generals (Lt. General Ismat Abdel Rahman, Inspector General; Lt. General Magzoub Rahma, Deputy Chief of Staff for Army Administration; and Major General Sadiq Amaar, Deputy Director for Military Intelligence) blamed tensions along the border on the relative lack of troop re-deployment by the SPLA. They cited the UN's estimates that the SAF has redeployed 95.3 percent of its troops away from the border, while the SPLA has only re-deployed 10.6 percent. General Ismat claimed that the SAF figure is actually low and that the SAF has now re-deployed all of its troops far from the border. Ismat said that the SPLA, in contrast, has re-deployed its troops just across the border, rather than to assembly areas, as mandated by the SAF/SPLA cease-fire agreement. Ismat said "We know that there are many SPLA soldiers in the Blue Nile." CDA Fernandez noted that many of these remaining SPLA soldiers are from Blue Nile state or Nuba Mountains and can not leave because of family ties.

General Ismat countered that these SPLA soldiers should leave these areas, go to assembly areas to be disarmed, and return home as civilians. He noted that what few SPLA troops have been redeployed from the North, did so without their arms (presumably leaving them in place in their previous sites).

14. (C) General Ismat asserted that the SAF/SPLA Joint Integrated Units (JIUs) have been a success story, but complained that the SPLA has prevented establishment of JIUs in several southern towns: Tonj, Shambe, Rumbek, Yei, and Kapoeta. "They don't want us to see what they are doing there." Ismat said that the SAF has requested establishing JIUs in these locations in meetings of the Joint Defense Board (JDB), the forum for SAF and SPLA to discuss issues pertaining to JIUs. (NOTE: The UN has long sought, unsuccessfully, to attain permission from the parties to attend JDB meetings. The SAF has opposed UN attendance at this particular meeting as the JDB is the only cease-fire monitoring entity that is SAF/SPLA exclusive. End note.)

15. (C) Ismat called for greater support and funding for JIUs by the International Community. CDA Fernandez responded that British diplomats have attempted to provide such support to JIUs, but have reported that GoS bureaucratic hurdles have stymied their attempts to do so. Ismat said that issues regarding support to JIUs should addressed directly to the JDB. The Generals' complaints about the SPLA at times veered toward the absurd, as they argued that the SPLA Headquarters in Juba is itself a violation of the cease-fire agreement, as it should be in Rumbek (the initial capital of the Government of Southern Sudan). General Ismat proudly stated that the SAF raises the issue in every JDB meeting, pointing out with a smile that "America helped build that nice building."

KHARTOUM 00000510 002 OF 003

16. (C) On the integration of Other Armed Groups (OAGs), General Ismat claimed that "There are no longer any OAGs allied to the SAF in the South." He said that Nuer tribesmen and other militias who had fought for the North have been integrated into JIU's (in the South) as SAF troops. He said these Nuer could not be re-deployed to the North because they have family connections to the area. "Some have 20-30 wives." He claimed that the presence of these Nuer in the JIUs was not a destabilizing issue, as they have "been fully trained and integrated." Although the presence of these groups and lack of integration between SPLA and SAF components in JIUs are widely cited as causes of the recent fighting in Malakal, following the arrival of the Nuer SAF General Gabriel Tang, Ismat placed the blame on the SPLA. "Tang went to visit his relatives. This is a problem between the SPLA and Gabriel Tang. We know the SPLA raises this all the time and complains to the International Community."

17. (C) Shortley noted that there is a continuing problem of undeclared OAG's and armed communities on the North-South border. The CDA raised the case of the Misseriya, who are involved in constant skirmishes with the Dinka around Abyei. Ismat concurred that it is a problem, noting that "The Misseriya cannot change the way (migratory pattern) of their cattle. We have tried to convince them to travel unarmed with their cattle, but many who go without arms are attacked and their cattle are stolen. We need to have a solution to problems during seasonal movements." CDA Fernandez underscored that the entire 1-1-1956 border is volatile and has become heavily militarized. The Generals all signaled agreement to this assessment.

18. (C) On Darfur, the SAF Generals blamed most of the violence in recent years on the "terrorist attacks" of rebel groups (such as JEM), in spite of numerous peace agreements signed by the GoS. They underscored that SAF is committed to its obligations under UNSC Resolution 1769 and recounted past SAF actions to defend UNAMID during and after attacks on peace-keepers. SE Gration called for an immediate cease-fire in Darfur and noted that most of the IDPs that he saw in Zam

Zam camp were there as a result of JEM attacks. He told the Generals that the USG will support efforts to achieve a cease-fire in Darfur and a lasting political settlement. After political issues are resolved between the USG and GoS, a return to a military relationship could follow. "We want to be partners with a strong country that takes care of its people." The Generals indicated that they would like a return to the past military relationship between the U.S. and Sudan, warmly recalling the days when the U.S. provided direct military assistance and SAF officers participated in military training programs in the U.S.. (Note: General Ismat, a forty year veteran of the SAF, received eight months of U.S. Army training at Fort Knox, Kentucky in 1979. End note.)

¶9. (C) During a lunch with the DATT following the meeting with SE Gration, Ismat, who was the SAF Darfur Western Area Commander from 2002-2003, revealed his own views on the Darfur conflict. Ismat blames the ethnic Zaghawa, which he estimates at only 5 percent of the Darfur population, for causing nearly all of the violence in the ongoing Darfur conflict. "The Zaghawa don't just want to take over Darfur, they want to take over the world!" He claimed that the notorious brutalities of Arab warlord Musa Hilal could be partially explained by the fact that his mother is Zaghawa. He said that Darfur is 65 percent Arab, but to demonstrate he is not an Arab-chauvinist, he said that "these Darfuri Arabs are not like the Arabs in the Gulf. They don't pray. They are really rough people. They are not even human!" To defeat the Zaghawa and Fur insurgency, General Ismat said that "this janjaweed issue" started when he and the SAF "mobilized the local population" due to a lack of regular SAF forces.

¶10. (C) COMMENT: The SAF Generals have a valid point in their complaints that the SPLA has redeployed only a small percentage of their forces, while nearly all regular SAF troops have been moved away from the border. However it is highly unlikely that the SPLA will ever agree to disarm its fighters along the tense and contested border, as this would be a hugely unpopular move in communities that currently support the SPLA and fought for it during the war. The SAF's continued support for pro-North Nuer groups, Misseriya Arab proxies in Abyei, and renegades like Gabriel Tang also make re-deployment a hard sell to the SPLA. Eventually a solution

KHARTOUM 00000510 003 OF 003

must be found for these SPLA forces, however, and such a solution must be explored before the end of the CPA period in ¶2011. Ismat's comments regarding the peoples of Darfur demonstrate that the racist mentality that led to the 2003-2006 atrocities still is present in SAF high command and that, were wide-scale fighting to re-erupt, the SAF can be expected to repeat its past misdeeds in Darfur or Southern Sudan. END COMMENT.

¶11. (U) SE Gration reviewed this message before transmission. FERNANDEZ